

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, forming a fire retardant mixture comprising a non-halogenated fire retardant, poly(arylene ether) resin, and a polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer by intimately mixing in melt;

in a second step, forming a non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the fire retardant mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets; and

in a third step, expanding the non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend;

wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units,

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 1 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

4-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 1 wherein the fire retardant mixture further comprises a nucleating agent.

7. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 1, wherein the fire retardant mixture further comprises an impact modifier.

8. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 1, wherein the non-halogenated fire retardant comprises butylated triphenyl phosphate ester, resorcinol tetraphenyl diphosphate, bis-phenol A tetraphenyl diphosphate, or a mixture of two or more of the foregoing.

9. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 1, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

10. (Currently amended) An expanded poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, forming a first mixture comprising poly(arylene ether) resin, and polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer by intimately mixing in melt;

in a second step forming an expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the first mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets; and

in a third step, expanding the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend, wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units,

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

11. (Original) The expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 10 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per

gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

12-13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) The expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 10 wherein the first mixture further comprises a nucleating agent.

15. (Original) The expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 10, wherein the first mixture further comprises an impact modifier.

16. (Original) The expanded poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 10, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

17. (Currently amended) An expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend comprising poly(arylene ether) resin, polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer, a nucleating agent and blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets and wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units, the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

18. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 17 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 17, further comprising an impact modifier.

22. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 17, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

23. (Currently amended) A non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend comprising poly(arylene ether) resin, polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer, a non-halogenated fire retardant, a nucleating agent and blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets and wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units, the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

24. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 23 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

25-26. (Canceled)

27. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 23, further comprising an impact modifier.

28. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 23, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

29. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 23, wherein the non-halogenated fire retardant comprises butylated triphenyl phosphate ester, resorcinol tetraphenyl diphosphate, bis-phenol A tetraphenyl diphosphate, or a mixture of two or more of the foregoing

30. (Currently amended) An expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, forming a first mixture comprising poly(arylene ether) resin and polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer, by intimately mixing in melt; and

in a second step forming an expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the first mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets,

wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

31. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 30 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

32-33. (Canceled)

34. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 30, further comprising an impact modifier.

35. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 30, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

36. (Original) The expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 30 wherein the first mixture further comprises a nucleating agent.

37. (Currently amended) A non-halogenated, fire retardant expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, forming a first mixture comprising poly(arylene ether) resin, polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer, and a non-halogenated fire retardant by intimately mixing in melt; and

in a second step forming an expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the first mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets,

wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units,

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

38. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 37 wherein the poly(arylene ether) has an intrinsic viscosity of about 0.1 to about 0.6 deciliters per gram as measured in chloroform at 25°C.

39-40. (Canceled)

41. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 37 wherein the fire retardant mixture further comprises a nucleating agent.

42. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 37, wherein the fire retardant mixture further comprises an impact modifier.

43. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 37, wherein the non-halogenated fire retardant comprises butylated triphenyl phosphate ester, resorcinol tetraphenyl diphosphate, bis-phenol A tetraphenyl

diphosphate, or a mixture of two or more of the foregoing.

44. (Original) The non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend of Claim 37, wherein the blowing agent comprises a pentane isomer or a mixture of pentane isomers.

45-51. (Canceled)

52. (Currently amended) A non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, melt mixing independent components comprising a non-halogenated fire retardant, poly(arylene ether) resin, and a polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizers to form a fire retardant mixture;

in a second step, forming a non-halogenated, fire retardant, expandable poly (arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the fire retardant mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets, and wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units,

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals.

53. (Currently amended) An expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend produced by the method comprising:

in a first step, melt mixing independent components comprising poly(arylene ether) resin and polystyrene resin essentially free of plasticizer by intimately mixing to form a first mixture; and

in a second step forming an expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend by intimately mixing in melt the first mixture with a blowing agent wherein the expandable poly(arylene ether)/polystyrene blend is in the form of pellets and wherein the polystyrene has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 240,000 atomic mass units,

wherein the poly(arylene ether) is present in an amount of 30 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the blend, and

wherein the blend, once expanded, produces a sound level less than or equal to about 60 decibels when the skin surface of a 2.5 cubic centimeter sample is rubbed across a clear coated test panel with a constant pressure of about 2-2.5 kilo Pascals. .